

County of San Diego

West Nile Virus Employee Fact Sheet

The following provides employees with information about some precautionary measures against West Nile virus, especially for those whose duties involve being out in the field.

West Nile Virus Information

Infected mosquitoes that bite humans and animals spread West Nile virus. Most people who are infected with West Nile virus will not become ill, but those that experience mild symptoms could have a fever, skin rash, headache, and body aches. In a few cases the illness may progress to encephalitis (swelling of the brain). People over 50 years of age and those with compromised immune systems have the highest risk of severe illness. If you have questions regarding your health or you believe you may have contracted the virus, see your doctor.

Personal Protection

Protect yourself around areas of mosquito activity by carrying out these steps:

- Wear long sleeves and pants to cover up skin when outdoors
- Apply an insect repellent containing DEET to thin clothing and exposed skin
- Plan outdoor activities to avoid times when mosquitoes are most active (dawn and dusk)
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors

Control Mosquito Breeding

An important way to prevent the spread of West Nile virus is to eliminate mosquito breeding. Mosquitoes lay their eggs and larvae develop into adults in standing water over a week's time.

- Eliminate standing water. Dispose of old tires appropriately. Drain ponds and pools that are not circulating. Empty out buckets and other standing water sources.
- Use mosquito fish to control mosquito larvae in decorative pools and ponds.
- Report mosquito breeding areas by calling DEH Vector Control at (888) 551-4636

Report Dead Birds

The appearance of West Nile virus is usually first detected by collecting and testing dead birds because birds are especially sensitive to the virus.

Dead birds meeting the following requirements should be reported:

- Birds should be dead for less than 24 hours
- There should be no foul odor
- There should be no ants or flies covering the bird
- Birds should not be stiff
- Birds should not be damaged by predators or cars



If you need mosquito fish, want to report dead birds or mosquito breeding areas, or have questions, please call DEH Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO (4636) or log onto the County's West Nile virus website at www.sdfightthebite.com.